

REMARKS

This is in response to the official action dated July 30, 2003. Reconsideration in view of the following is respectfully requested.

The examiner cites U.S. Patent No. 5267633 to Endo as anticipating the claimed invention under 35 USC 102. In order to support an anticipation rejection, the examiner must find that each and every limitation of the claims is found in the reference. That is not the case here.

The claims require "a damper arranged between the second spring and the first mass". While the examiner states that this limitation is found in Endo, it is not stated where it is found.

Endo teaches in Figure 1 a first and second mass 2, 5, a spring 3, and a damper 9. Is it the examiner's position that the damper 9 is 'between' the spring 3 and the first mass 2? The skilled person would understand that the term 'between' in the context of a spring/damper arrangement, does not simply mean "somehow located at a height between that of the spring and that of the mass". Rather, the skilled person would understand that the damper is *operatively* between, i.e. located *in sequence* or *in line* between the mass and the spring.

Endo teaches a damper which directly links the first and second mass. It is not operatively between the spring and the mass. Therefore, Endo can not anticipate the claims.

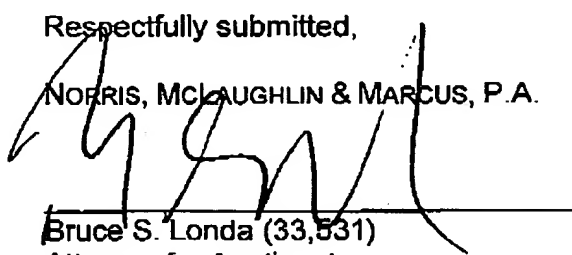
Further, the claims are not obvious in view of Endo. In Endo's arrangement, a locking of the damping function of damper 9 causes a relative locking of masses 2 and 5; and spring 3 can not exert a springing effect between masses 2 and 5. In the claimed arrangement, a locking of the damper has the result of allowing relative springing movement of the first and second masses, except that the spring function of the first spring is based only on the spring alone, and not on the combined damper/spring action.

The claims are amended to correct the dependency. Claim 9 is amended to clarify that the spring couples the first and second masses.

Wherefore, allowance of all pending claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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